

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST

PART I. Purpose of and Need for Action

1. Project Title: Fort Connah Restoration Society
2445 Blue Mountain Road
Missoula, MT 59801

2. Type of Proposed Action: Black Powder & Archery Range Construction: 100 meter range, six station covered line with shooting benches, concrete base with a log storage shed. Minimal facilities are required for a primitive range such as planned at Fort Connah.

3. Location Affected by Proposed Action:

The proposed range is on the Flathead Indian Reservation located between St. Ignatius and Ronan, Montana. A portion of the SW ¼ NW ¼ of Section 13, Township 19 North, Range 20 West, P.M.M.

4. Agency Authority for the Proposed Action: MCA87-1-276 through 87-1-279
(Legislative established policies and procedures for the establishment and improvement of shooting ranges)
MCA87-2-105 (Departmental authority to expend funds to provide training in the safe handling and use of firearms and safe hunting practices)

5. Need for the Action(s): This range will fill a need for the expanding interest in black powder and archery. Organization already has a list of nearly 100 who are interested in this range. There are no ranges of this type within a reasonable distance for this area.

6. Objectives for the Action(s): The range will be limited to the shooting of black powder weapons and archery which are in keeping with the historic concept and the adjacent historic Fort Connah. Fort Connah was a Hudson's Bay Co. trading post from 1846 to 1871. The primary objective is to provide a safe facility for the shooting of black powder and archery. A secondary objective will be to increase and

interest and involvement in both shooting period weapons but also increased historic interest in the area and specifically the preservation of the Historic Fort Connah.

7. Map:

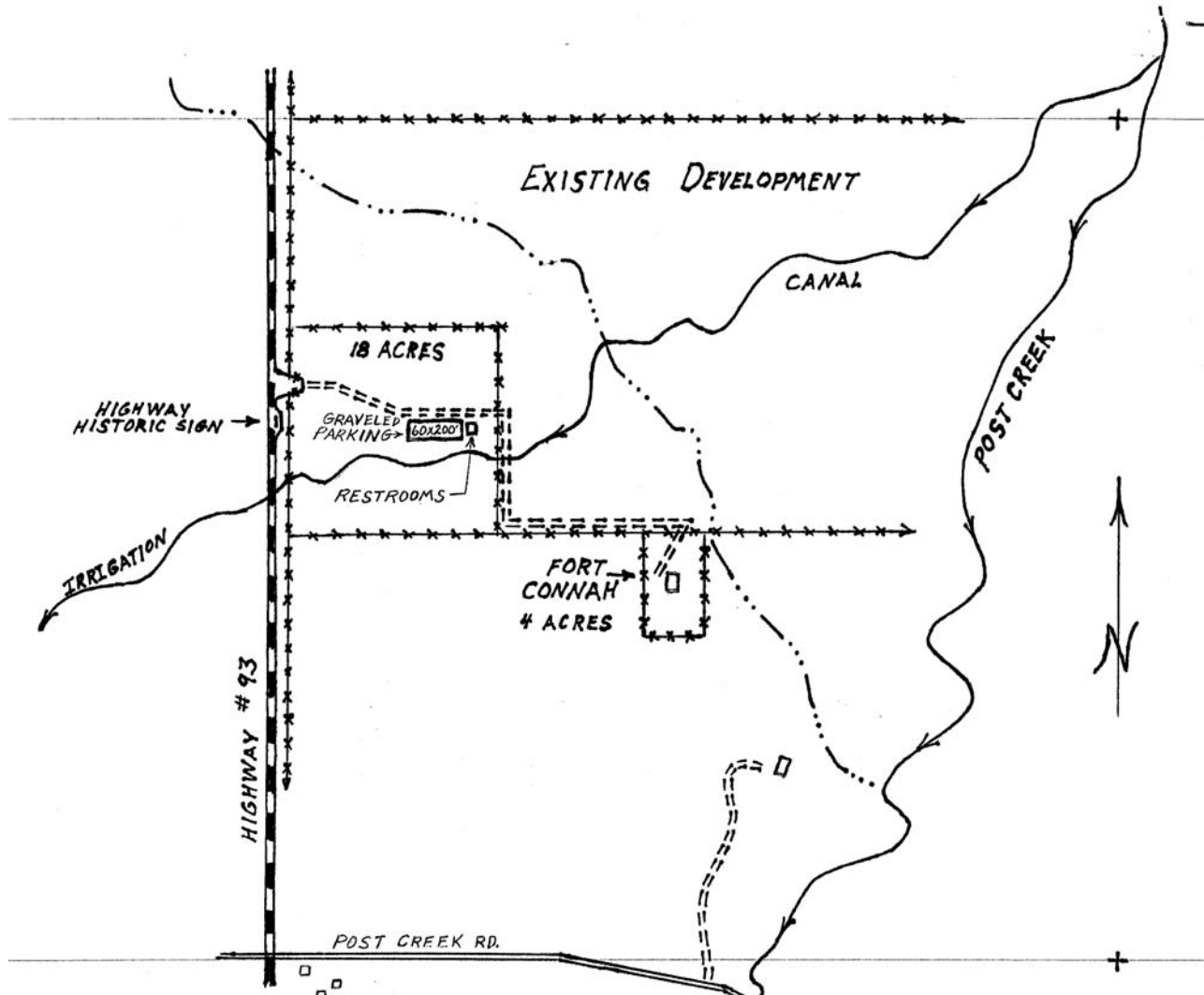


Figure 1 - Map of Fort Connah Restoration Society Properties.

8. Project Size: Estimate the number of acres that would be directly affected that are currently:

The Fort Connah Restoration Society owns two parcels of land – one of four acres at the historic fort site and one of 18 acres recently purchased to provide access from Highway 93 to the fort site. The 18 acre parcel is the area of the proposed range.

9. Affected Environment (A brief description of the affected area of the

proposed project):

The 18 acres are open grassland with a previous history of grazing. Grazing will probably continue on the 18 acre parcel exclusive of the fenced range itself.

10. Description of Project: (1) Excavating target area, concrete slab, and firing line. (2) Concrete Slab (3) Log shed (4) Roofing – shed and firing line (5) Benches (6) Fences – jack leg, log rails (7) Targets. The jack leg fence and shed will be rail and log, in keeping with the rustic and period concept. All top soil removed in excavation will be set aside and replaced on disturbed areas, then replanted with natural grasses.

In Accordance With (IAW) contracts agreements with Fish, Wildlife & Parks, and all projects are to be completed by June 30, 2006.

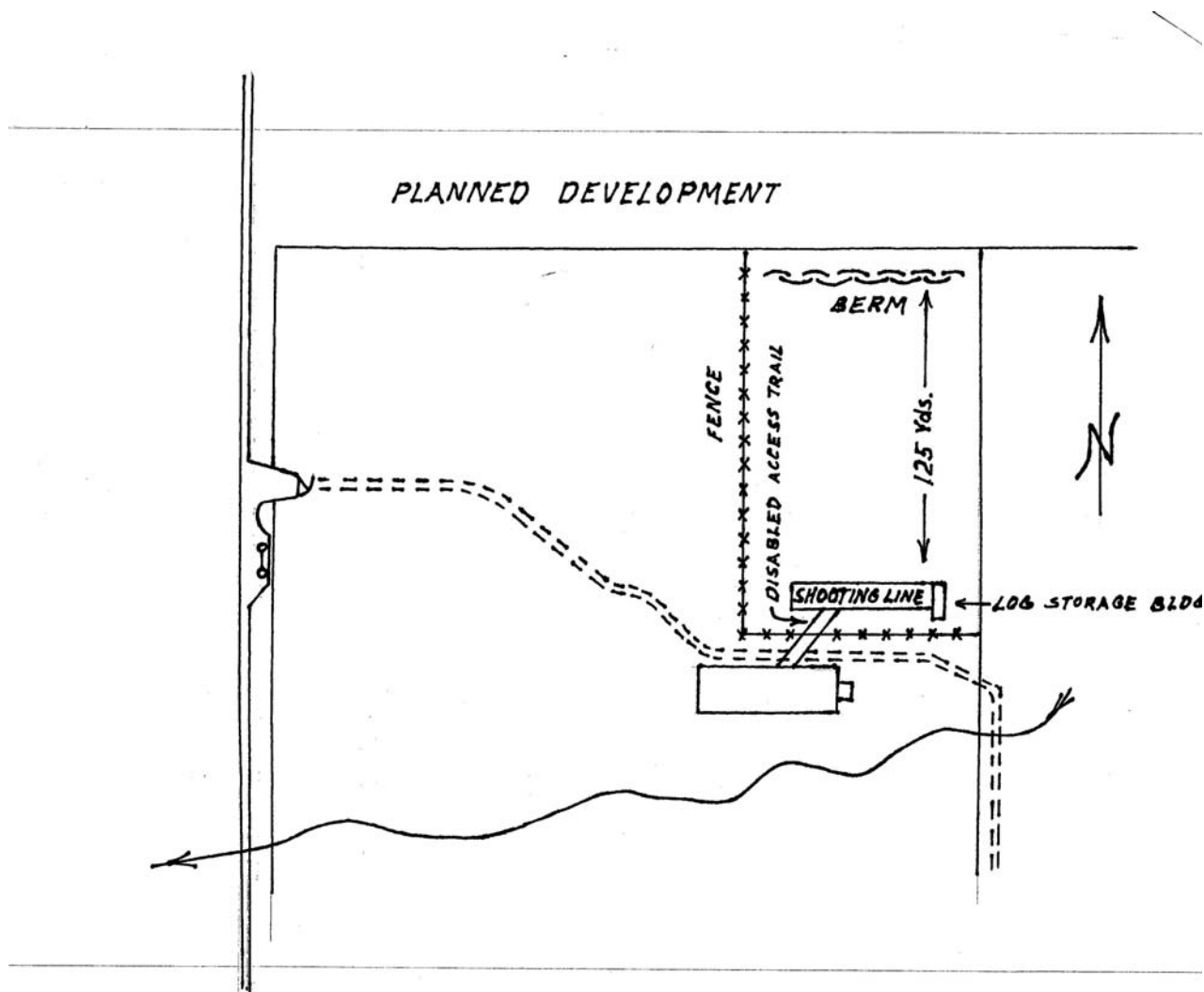


Figure 2 - Range Development Proposals

11. List any Other Local, State, or Federal Agency that has Overlapping or Additional Jurisdiction:

(a) Permits, Licenses and/or Authorizations:

<u>Agency Name</u>	<u>Permit</u>
Confederated Salish & Kootenai Tribes	
(Tribal Irrigation Authority)	Culvert
Montana Department of Transportation	Highway Easement (Access)

Funding:

<u>Agency Name</u>	<u>Funding Amount</u>
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks	\$10,400

12. Affiliations, Cooperating Agencies, User Groups and/or Supporting Groups: Grant money was allocated for purchase of the 18 acres from “Coal-Tax” money from the Montana Cultural Trust. This money was matched by the Confederated Salish & Kootenai Tribes. There was also a matching grant through the Flathead Community Development for the Restoration Society.

13. History of the Planning and Scoping Process, and Any Public Involvement: Approximately two years ago a meeting was held to make public the proposal for building a traditional black powder and archery range on the Fort Connah Restoration Society property. At that time nearly 100 people made it know that they were interested in aiding this project. There were no objections voiced to the proposal.

14. List of Agencies Consulted/Contacted During Preparation of the EA:
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

15. Name, Address and Phone Number of Project Sponsor:
George Knapp
2445 Blue Mountain Road
Missoula, MT 59804
(406) 549-4431

16. Other Pertinent Information:

Shooting range applications require the participant’s governing body to approve by resolution its submission of applications for shooting range funding assistance. Resolution Date: June 15, 2005

PART II. ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

Abbreviated Checklist - The degree and intensity determines extent of Environmental Review. An abbreviated checklist may be used for those projects that are not complex, controversial, or are not in environmental

sensitive areas)

Table 1. Potential impact on physical environment.

Will the proposed action result in potential impacts to:	Unknown	Potentially Significant	Minor	None	Can Be Mitigated	Comments Below
1. Unique, endangered, fragile, or limited environmental resources				X		
2. Terrestrial or aquatic life and/or habitats				X		X
3. Introduction of new species into an area				X		
4. Vegetation cover, quantity & quality				X		
5. Water quality, quantity & distribution (surface or groundwater)				X		X
6. Existing water right or reservation				X		
7. Geology & soil quality, stability & moisture				X		
8. Air quality or objectionable odors				X		
9. Historical & archaeological sites				X		X
10. Demands on environmental resources of land, water, air & energy				X		
11. Aesthetics				X		

Comments (A description of potentially significant, or unknown, impacts and potential alternatives for mitigation must be provided.)

2. & 5. There are no live streams or ponds on the site and no delineated wetlands. There is however, an irrigation canal running east to west through the property south of the proposed shooting range. The canal is approximately 75 yards from the back of the shooting line and over 200 yards from the impact area. There is a 24 inch culvert to be installed between the shooting line and the target area to facilitate draining of that area. A permit was granted by the Confederated Salish & Kootenai Tribes through their Tribal Irrigation authority. The site was inspected by the tribal Natural Resources Department with both wildlife & environmental personnel.

9. The proposed range is approximately ¼ mile from the historic Fort Connah. Both the fort and the range are on property owned by the Fort Connah Restoration Society and both will be operated by the society. The SHPO was contacted about the proposed action(s) on the site and had no official jurisdiction over the site or comment concerning the proposed action. Money for purchase of this 18 acre parcel was also granted from the “Coal-tax” money through the Montana Cultural Trust with matching funds from the Confederated Salish & Kootenai Tribes.

Table 2. Potential impacts on human environment.

Will the proposed action result in potential impacts to:	Unknown	Potentially Significant	Minor	None	Can Be Mitigated	Comments Below
1. Social structures and cultural diversity				X		
2. Changes in existing public benefits provided by wildlife populations and/or habitat				X		
3. Local and state tax base and tax revenue				X		
4. Agricultural production				X		X
5. Human health				X		X
6. Quantity & distribution of community & personal income				X		
7. Access to & quality of recreational activities				X		X
8. Locally adopted environmental plans & goals (ordinances)				X		
9. Distribution & density of population and housing				X		
10. Demands for government services				X		
11. Industrial and/or commercial activity				X		

Comments (A description of potentially significant, or unknown, impacts and potential alternatives for mitigation must be provided.)

4. The site is adjacent to surrounding grazing land. Currently cattle are grazed on the 18 acre parcel. It is the intent of the society to continue a cattle lease in the future, with a smaller area at the range itself being fenced to preclude cattle.

5. Range site plans, construction and the ongoing operational and maintenance plans meet the standards of safety for the range participants and the public at large Posted range and safety signs are planned for the area.

7. Range will provide year round access and fills a need for a range to accommodate the shooting of historic or traditional weapons.

Part III. Environmental Consequences

Does the proposed action involve potential risks or adverse effects which are uncertain but extremely

harmful if they were to occur? NO

Does the proposed action have impacts that are individually minor, but cumulatively significant or potentially significant? This proposed action has no impacts that are individually minor, but cumulatively significant or potentially significant. Cumulative impacts have been assessed considering any incremental impact of the proposed action when they are combined with other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions, and no significant impacts or substantially controversial issues were found. There are no extreme hazards created with this project and there are no conflicts with the substantive requirements of any local, state, or federal law, regulation, standard or formal plan.

Identification of the Preferred Alternatives:

Only the proposed alternative and the no action alternative were considered.

Description and analysis of reasonable alternatives (including the no action alternative) to the proposed action whenever alternatives are reasonably available and prudent to consider and a discussion of how the alternatives would be implemented: Only the proposed alternative and the no action alternative were considered. There were no other alternatives that were deemed reasonably available, nor prudent. Neither the proposed alternative nor the no action alternative would have any significant negative environmental or potentially negative consequences. There are beneficial consequences to Acceptance of the proposed alternatives to provide a safe environment for shooting traditional weapons, such as increased recreational opportunities, increased safety, and a handicap accessible facility. The no action alternative would be not to develop the range and continue on with present activities. Land use would remain the same. Present activities include shooting activities on unsupervised or uncontrolled temporary areas. Therefore the proposed alternative is the prudent alternative.

Describe any Alternatives considered and eliminated from Detailed Study:

NONE

List and explain proposed mitigative measures (stipulations): NONE

Individuals or groups contributing to, or commenting on, this EA:

George Knapp, Project Director, Fort Connah Restoration Society

PART IV NARRATIVE EVALUATION AND COMMENT

All of the pertinent or potential impacts of the project have been reviewed, discussed, and analyzed. None of the project reviewed were complex, controversial, or located in an environmentally sensitive area. The projects being implemented are on properties owned by the Fort Connah Restoration Society and will be developed by them keeping the historic significance of the area in mind for all future activities and developments. The low impact activities proposed and the increased recreational opportunity, coupled with the enhanced awareness of the historic significance of the nearby area, indicates that this should be considered the final version of the environmental assessment. There are no significant environmental or economic impacts associated with the proposed alternative. The long history of the Fort Connah Restoration Society's involving the local public in the local history and increasing their awareness and support in preserving both the archeological and cultural history of the area, all indicate support of the proposed alternative. Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks should approve the proposed alternative for the Fort Connah Restoration Society range proposals.

EA prepared by: GENE R. HICKMAN
Ecological Assessments
Helena, MT 59602

Date Completed: September 9, 2005

PART IV. EA CONCLUSION SECTION

Recommendation and justification concerning preparation of EIS:

None required.

Describe public involvement, if any: Initial scoping meeting and proposal presentation in 2003 with over 100 people "signing-on" to aid in the proposed range project. There were no objections posed at that time or since to the proposed project.